USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

November 2015

North Savery Project Scoping Document

Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District

MEDICINE BOW-ROUTT NATIONAL FORESTS & THUNDER BASIN NATIONAL GRASSLAND

Carbon County, Wyoming

T14-16N R86-88W

Responsible Official: **Melanie B. Fullman**
District Ranger

For Further Information Contact: **Monique Nelson**
(307) 745-2310
moniquelnelson@fs.fed.us

Disclaimer:

The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data it has available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. They may be: developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based on modeling or interpretation, incomplete while being created or revised, have represented features not in accurate geographic locations, etc. The Forest Service makes no expressed or implied warranty, including warranty of merchantability and fitness, with respect to the character, function, or capabilities of the data or their appropriateness for any user's purposes. The Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace this geospatial information based on new inventories, new or revised information, and if necessary in conjunction with other federal, state or local public agencies or the public in general as required by policy or regulation. Previous recipients of the products may not be notified unless required by policy or regulation. For more information, contact the Medicine Bow - Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland Supervisor's Office (2468 Jackson Street, Laramie, WY 82070, 307-745-2300).

Cover Photo: *National Forest System Road 448.1C was once located where this beaver pond now exists. This road is proposed for decommissioning because it is no longer passable. Addition of well-placed unauthorized routes and new OHV trails would provide improved legal access to this area of the forest.*

Introduction

The Forest Service is seeking public input on the North Savery Project. The project is located in the northwest corner of the Sierra Madre mountain range on the Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District of the Medicine Bow National Forest in Carbon County, Wyoming. This area was identified by the Governor of Wyoming as a priority landscape for treatment due to impacts from insects and disease under the 2014 Farm Bill[1] and the amended Healthy Forests Restoration Act[2]. Recommendation by the Governor and designation by the Chief of the Forest Service as a priority landscape allows the Forest Service to expedite forest treatments to bring this high-productivity forest back into production and deliver forest products to local mills. The area was chosen due to forest health decline, substantial tree mortality, and the presence of trees that pose a risk to public infrastructure, health, and safety.

The North Savery Project proposal includes vegetation treatments to salvage timber from mountain pine beetle affected stands, complete precommercial thinning on over-stocked timber stands to promote timber yield, clear hazard trees from roadsides, fences, and ditches, and create fuelbreaks. The proposal also includes connected actions to relocate, reconstruct, and restore to natural conditions portions of the road system in the project area.

This Scoping Document describes the proposal for the North Savery Project so that the public and other agencies can provide feedback to the Forest Service. Please consider the proposal and let us know your thoughts on how to improve it. Based on public comments, the Forest Service interdisciplinary team will identify issues and concerns related to the proposals and may modify the proposals or look for alternative ways to accomplish management needs.

The Forest Service plans to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental analysis and decide whether or not to implement the proposed action or another alternative as early as the fall of 2016. The environmental analysis will be documented in an environmental impact statement (EIS). The project will be analyzed under provisions of hazardous fuel reduction projects, due to the presence of insect and disease, as defined by the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and 2014 Farm Bill, and is subject to subparts A and C of the Forest Service Predecisional Objection Process[3]. The District may begin implementing this project as soon as 2017. The Responsible Official for this project is Melanie Fullman, Brush Creek/Hayden District Ranger.

North Savery Analysis Area

The North Savery Analysis Area is located in Carbon County, approximately 15 miles west of Encampment, Wyoming, on the Sierra Madre portion of the Medicine Bow National Forest, Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District. The legal description is T14-16N R86-88W. The analysis area lies north of Battle Highway (Hwy 70), with the Forest boundary representing the north and parts of the east and west boundary (Map 1). The

[1] Title VIII, Section 8204 of the Agriculture Act of 2014 (also referred to as 2014 Farm Bill), Available at: http://www.fs.fed.us/farmbill/index.shtml

[2] Title VI of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591 et seq.) as amended (section 602, designation of treatment areas), Available at: http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/resources/overview/hfra-implementation12-2004.shtml

[3] 36 Code of Federal Regulations, part 218, Available at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CFR-2013-title36-vol2/CFR-2013-title36-vol2-part218

analysis area encompasses approximately 45,698 acres, including 44,572 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands (98%), 357 acres of State of Wyoming land (<1%), and 769 acres of private land (2%). Elevation ranges from approximately 7,000 feet to just over 11,000 feet at Bridger Peak. The analysis area straddles the Continental Divide and includes all or portions of six 6th level watersheds on the east side and two on the west side. Approximately 3,586 acres (8%) of the analysis area is within three Inventoried Roadless Areas (Map 2).

Purpose and Need

The **purpose** of the North Savery Analysis is to improve ecosystem health and forest productivity in the analysis area through vegetation, fuels, and roads projects. More specifically, the project purpose is to:

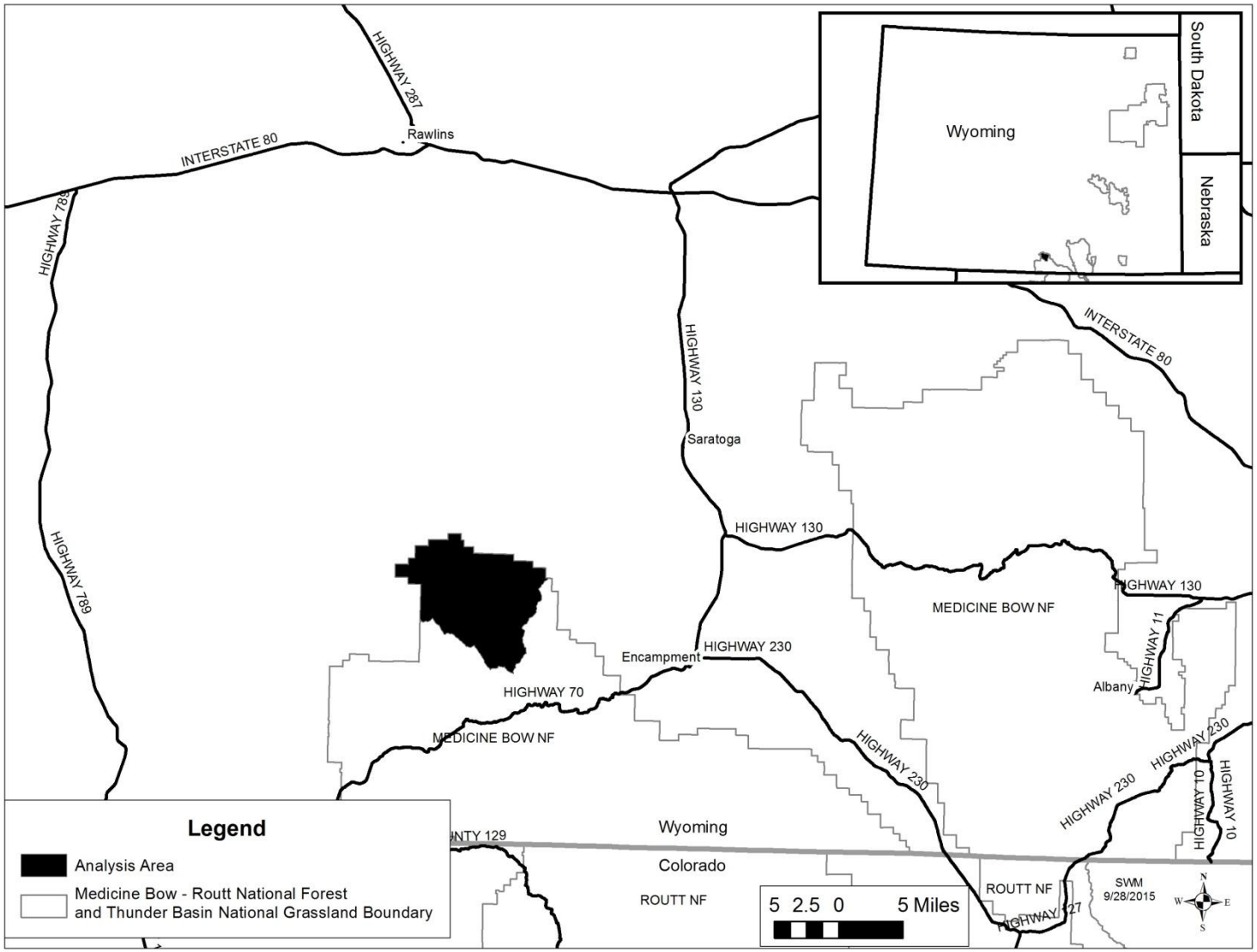
- Promote forest regeneration, particularly in stands affected by mountain pine beetle;
- Treat overstocked timber stands to improve growth and vigor;
- Reduce development of large continuous high hazard fuel conditions in high timber production areas;
- Remove hazard trees from high priority areas affecting public safety;
- Provide merchantable timber products for sale from designated timber units; and
- Relocate, reconstruct, or restore to natural conditions portions of the existing road system that are in need of maintenance or are detrimentally contributing to watershed health.

The project is **needed** because:

- Over the past decade, a mountain pine beetle epidemic has killed pine trees across thousands of acres of forest land in southern Wyoming. In lodgepole pine forests, approximately 70% of the trees greater than 6" in diameter are dead or dying from mountain pine beetle infestation.
- Timber stands in the North Savery Project Analysis Area are among the most productive growing sites on the Medicine Bow National Forest, and it is a priority to reforest and return these stands to timber production. There is a limited time in which to salvage these trees and recover a sawtimber product.
- Fuel breaks suitable for holding firelines and protecting values at risk do not exist in many parts of the analysis area.
- Standing dead trees create safety hazards to the public and Forest Service employees.
- Some designated roads are contributing to degraded resource conditions on the forest, including loss of vegetation, erosion, sedimentation to streams, and reduced quality of wildlife habitat. Road improvements, such as replacing failing culverts, are also needed.

Proposal Development

In August of 2007, the Brush Creek/Hayden District interdisciplinary team completed the *Savery Landscape Scale Assessment* and identified several land management projects within the "Savery" analysis area. A proposed action for the larger Savery area was developed in 2010; this proposal was scoped with the public but never fully analyzed. In 2013, the southwestern portion of the Savery proposal, located just north of the Battle Highway near the western Forest boundary, was analyzed as the "Bud" project; this project is now in the implementation phase. The North Savery Project will analyze most of the remainder of the 2010 Savery proposal.



Map 1. Location of the North Savery Analysis Area in southern Wyoming.

Existing Condition

Forest Production

There are approximately 35,483 forested acres in the analysis area, including 25,210 acres of lodgepole pine (72%), 7,586 acres of spruce/fir (22%), and 2,142 acres of aspen (6%). The lower elevations also contain cottonwood, blue spruce, Douglas-fir, Gambel oak, and white fir.

Approximately 73% of the analysis area is within timber emphasis areas, where harvested timber contributes to the Forest allowable sale quantity (ASQ) of timber. These areas are characterized by forests that can be intensively managed for wood fiber due to their accessibility, terrain, and resource conditions. Currently, approximately 70% of lodgepole pine trees larger than 6" diameter at breast height (DBH) are dead or dying from mountain pine beetle infestation, and opportunities to recover merchantable sawtimber from these dead trees are rapidly decreasing. With time, the deadfall in beetle-killed areas has the potential to slow or prevent new regeneration. Salvage harvest can be a tool to create an adequate seedbed and ensure sufficient seed for natural regeneration or initiate the artificial regeneration process.

From 1974 through 2011, approximately 7,900 acres of timber were harvested in the North Savery Analysis Area. No timber sales are currently active in the analysis area, but the Joe's Park and Jack Creek III timber sales were completed within the past 5 years. Also, roadside hazard tree clearing has occurred on National Forest System road (NFSR) 452 (Jack Creek Road) within the past 5 years and two other roadside hazard clearing projects are planned along NFSR 830 (Deep Jack Road) and NFSR 443 (Jerry Accord Road). Approximately 1,200 acres of the Battle Hazardous Fuels Project in the analysis area was recently implemented under a stewardship contract.

Roads

There are 162 miles of designated roads and 52 miles of unauthorized (user-created, decommissioned, or undesignated) routes within the analysis area. In addition to providing public access to the National Forest, roads and unauthorized routes can contribute to increased water yield on forests and rangelands, and cumulatively can have negative impacts on streams and wetlands. Some roads and routes have direct negative impacts on water quality and wildlife habitat; these roads should be relocated, reconstructed, closed, or restored to a more natural state.

A complete travel analysis is required by Federal regulations (36 CFR Part 212, Travel Management; 36 CFR Part 295, Use of Motor Vehicles Off Forest Service Roads) to consider the benefits of each road (e.g., recreation, range, special use access) as well as the impacts of each road on natural resources (e.g., terrestrial and aquatic habitat, water quality, vegetation). This analysis determines the minimum road system needed to manage the forest and can be used to designate the official forest road system. Travel analysis has been completed on most of the Sierra Madre portion of the Brush Creek/Hayden District, but has not been completed in the North Savery Analysis Area.

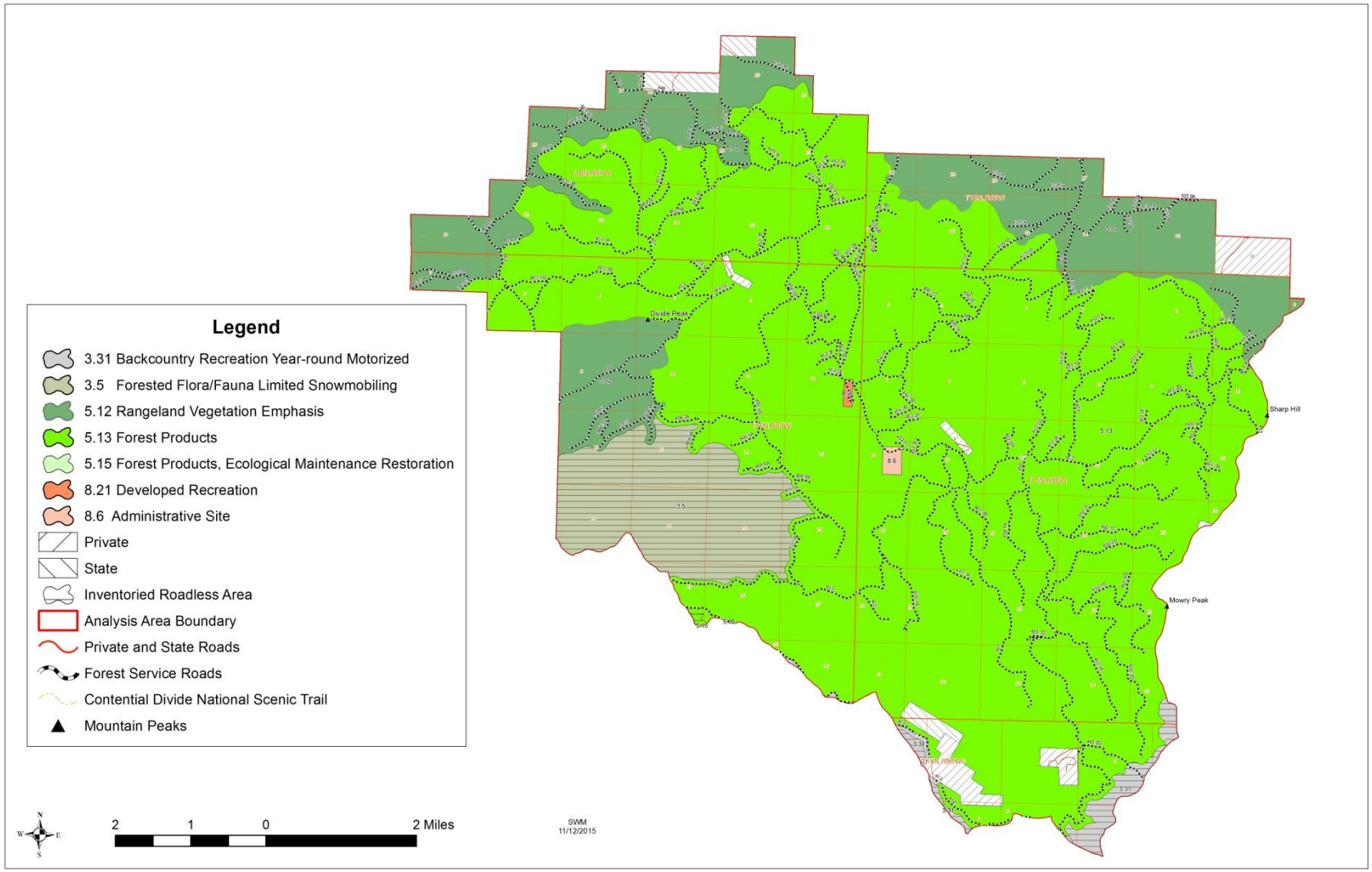
Forest Plan Direction

The Medicine Bow National Forest 2003 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan[4] guides natural resource management activities and provides an overall strategy for managing the Medicine Bow National Forest. Direction for management is provided at the forest-wide, geographic area, and management area levels, and is implemented with the most site-specific (management area) direction superseding the more general direction. The analysis area contains portions of seven different management areas (Table 1 and Map 2). The Forest Plan contains direction at all three management levels that is pertinent to this analysis and to the specific activities identified for the analysis area. To the best of the knowledge of the Forest Service interdisciplinary team, the proposal is in compliance with all Forest Plan direction.

Table 1. Management Areas within the North Savery Project Analysis Area.

#	Management Area Prescription	Acres in Analysis Area	% of Analysis Area
3.31	**Backcountry Recreation, Year-round Motorized:** Provide recreation opportunities on primitive roads and trails in a landscape with a natural appearance.	476	1
3.5	**Forested Flora or Fauna Habitats, Limited Snowmobiling:** Provide adequate forage, cover, escape terrain, solitude, breeding habitat, and protection for wildlife and plant communities.	3,136	7
5.12	**General Forest & Rangelands, Rangeland Vegetation Emphasis:** Sustain values associated with areas of woody vegetation and open grassland and provide habitat and forage for livestock and wildlife.	7,385	16
5.13	**Forest Products:** Produce commercial wood products.	33,485	73
5.15	**Forest Products, Ecological Maintenance & Restoration:** Maintain or restore healthy ecological conditions while providing for a mix of ecological and human needs, including wood products.	3	<1
8.21	**Developed Recreation:** Provide an array of recreational opportunities and experiences in a forested environment, with highly-developed multiple-use recreation complexes.	26	<1
8.6	**Administrative Sites:** Manage administrative sites and facilities to meet Forest Service needs.	59	<1
	Total NFS Acres	**44,572**	**97**
	Non-FS (State and Private)	1,126	3
	TOTAL	**45,698**	**100**

[4] USDA Forest Service. 2003. Medicine Bow National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, Chapters 1, 2, and 3. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. Lakewood, CO. Available at http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mbr/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsbdev3_025109.



Map 2. Management Areas, Inventoried Roadless Areas, and the Current Road System in the North Savery Project Analysis Area.

Proposed Action

The proposed action includes silvicultural treatments for timber and fuels management as well as road relocation, reconstruction, and restoration.

Silvicultural Treatments

The Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District proposes to treat approximately 6,535 acres within the North Savery Analysis Area, including up to approximately 5,500 acres of salvage harvest, 1,035 acres of precommercial thinning, and 231 acres of hazard tree treatments (these fall within salvage harvest units), with an emphasis on salvaging dead and dying trees for forest products, promoting forest regeneration, restoring forest health and productivity, and reducing hazardous fuels and hazard trees. The Forest Service has identified and will analyze approximately 7,700 acres for salvage harvest, mostly within timber production emphasis areas, in order to choose the best locations (Table 2 and Map 3). Approximately 2,200 of the analyzed acres would not be harvested in order to conserve watershed heath and wildlife habitat. Acres to be set aside from treatment would be determined based on the analyzed effects to water yields in each watershed and the presence of wildlife and other resources of interest.

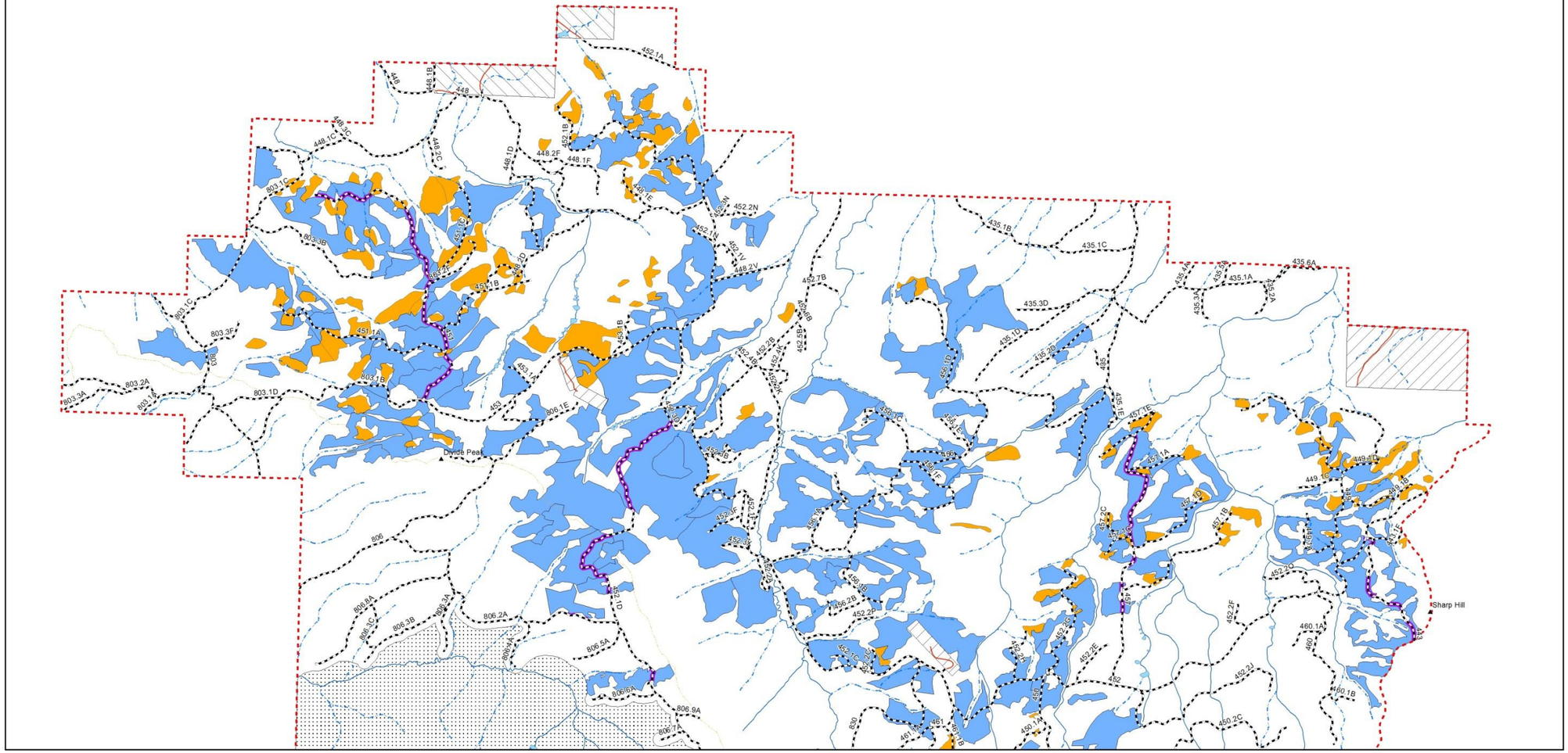
Table 2. Acres analyzed for treatment by Forest Plan Management Area. Although 7,700 acres will be analyzed for salvage harvest, only 5,500 acres would be selected for treatment.

Management Area	Treatments and Acres
5.12 General Forest & Rangelands, Rangeland Vegetation Emphasis	Salvage Harvest: 139 Precommercial Thinning: 84
5.13 Forest Products	Precommercial Thinning: 951 Hazard Tree: 231 Salvage Harvest: 7,538
8.21 Developed Recreation	Salvage Harvest: 11
8.6 Administrative Sites	Salvage Harvest: 5
Total	**8,959**

Silvicultural treatments attempt to simulate natural processes to create optimum conditions for forest resiliency, growth, and regeneration. Timber management through silvicultural systems considers not only growing and harvesting trees, but the benefits and impacts of treatments to forest resources such as recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and water quality. Silvicultural prescriptions would be developed to achieve multiple natural resource management objectives.

Salvage Harvest

Overstory Removal and Clearcut treatments would be used in lodgepole pine stands to salvage dead and dying trees. Although the intent is to remove dead and dying trees, live trees would probably also be removed as part of these treatments. Recent experience with similar projects indicates that isolated live trees usually succumb to windthrow and do not contribute to later stand structure. Pockets of wind-firm, healthy trees would be left whenever feasible.



N
W E
S

Page 1 of 2

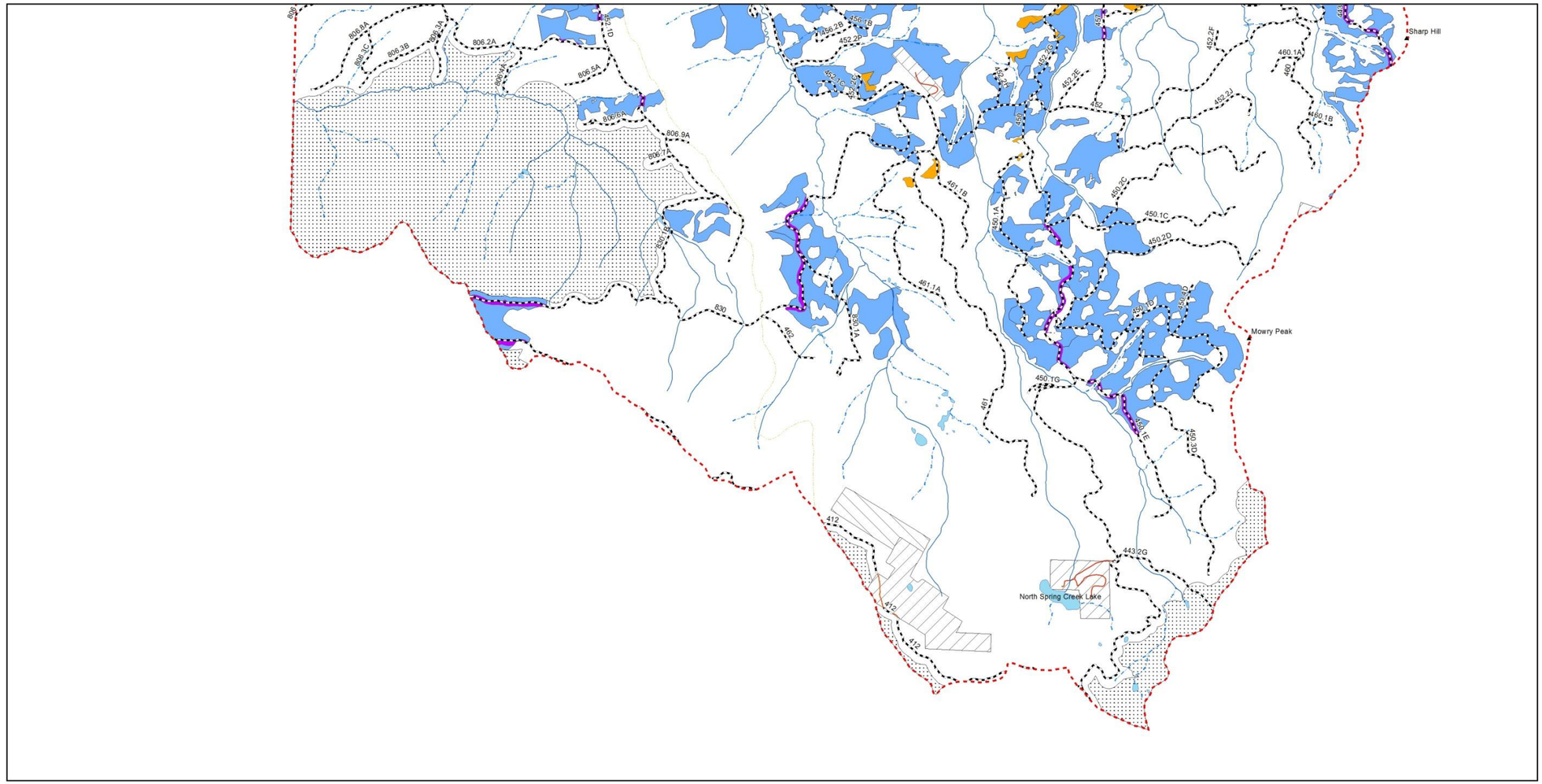
2 1 0 2 Miles

SWM
11/17/2015

Legend

- Salvage Harvest
- Precommercial Thinning
- Hazard Tree Clearing
- Roadless
- FSroadsExisting
- Private and State Roads
- Trail
- Intermittent Stream
- Perennial Stream
- Lakes
- Private
- State
- Analysis Area Boundary
- Mountain Peaks

Map 3a. Silvicultural treatments proposed in the North Savery Analysis Area (North).



N
W E
S

Page 2 of 2

2 1 0 2 Miles

SWM
11/17/2015

Legend

- Salvage Harvest
- Precommercial Thinning
- Hazard Tree Clearing
- Roadless
- FSroadsExisting
- Private and State Roads
- Trail
- Intermittent Stream
- Perennial Stream
- Lakes
- Private
- State
- Analysis Area Boundary
- Mountain Peaks

Map 3b. Silvicultural treatments proposed in the North Savery Analysis Area (South).

Example of a stand proposed for Overstory Removal treatment (left) and one proposed for Clearcut treatment (right). These photos are from the Bud Project area, just south of the North Savery Project.

Overstory removal treatments are used in areas that have a significant understory component. The intent is to harvest overstory trees while maintaining understory trees that are too small to be merchantable. Clearcut prescriptions are used in stands that have beetle mortality greater than 70%, are highly mistletoe infested, have low levels of existing regeneration, or where the remaining green trees would be at high risk of windthrow. Species present and the presence, distribution, and health of the understory would dictate what options are available for salvage treatments on a stand-by-stand basis. Generally, lodgepole pine trees over 7.0 inches DBH would be designated for removal. Trees of all species less than 7.0 inches DBH would generally remain on site. Areas within units that have large, contiguous components of Engelmann spruce may be retained for wildlife. Subalpine fir, when found as a minor component in lodgepole pine stands, would not be retained unless included as wildlife habitat.

Salvage units would be packaged into multiple timber sales, based on the availability and size of industry and the product that can be used at that time. Many harvest units in the North Savery Project may be larger than 40 acres in size due to the extent of the mortality caused by the mountain pine beetle epidemic[5].

[5] USDA Forest Service. 2003. Medicine Bow National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, Timber Management Direction and Silvicultural Standards, Pages 1-16 and 1-35. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. Lakewood, CO. Available at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mbr/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fsbdev3_025109.

Precommercial Thinning

Precommercial thinning is proposed on approximately 1,035 acres of densely regenerating lodgepole pine seedling/sapling stands (Table 2 and Map 3). Precommercial thinning would improve growth and vigor, reduce stress from overcrowding and competition, and provide for a future stand that is less susceptible to bark beetles. This treatment would provide for continued production of sawtimber as prescribed in the Forest Plan.

Hazard Tree Clearing

Some areas identified for salvage harvest include hazard trees along roads, fencelines, ditches, trails, and administrative sites. Many of these same areas were approved for treatment under the *2008 Forest-wide Hazardous Tree Removal and Fuels Reduction Project,* which approved hazard tree clearing on Forest Service level 2 through level 5 roads. Some of these areas may be harvested prior to the rest of the salvage harvest treatments. Level 1 roads proposed for hazard tree clearing in this project analysis area have not been previously approved.

Fuel Break Treatments

Suitable timber (classified as Management Prescription 5.13 & 5.15) is considered a value at risk and is to be protected from wildland fire using direct control strategies. Fuel break treatment areas are located strategically in proposed salvage harvest units, generally along roads. The fuelbreak treatments would be approximately 200 feet wide (100 feet on either side of the road). Within the fuelbreaks, whole tree skidding would be used to minimize slash and future tree regeneration would be managed to the lowest stocking level allowed for conifer species (150 trees per acre[6]). Approximately 230 acres of fuel breaks would be created along roads and where proposed unit boundaries intercept.

Slash Treatments

Slash treatments would be determined by post-harvest conditions and could include: lopping and scattering, machine scattering, piling followed by burning piles, roller chopping, and whole-tree-skidding. Care would be taken to protect reserve and understory trees, retain serotinous cones throughout the site as available, and maintain large down woody debris.

Implementation Details

The operational characteristics of each treatment differ slightly depending on size, shape, slope and volume of each stand. Trees would typically be felled and stacked using a tracked or rubber tired machine, called a feller/buncher, or possibly by using chainsaws. Bucking and delimbing would most likely be accomplished using a boom delimber, but could also be done with a chainsaw. Some form of tractor/skidder would be used to transport logs to a landing; therefore, native-surface skid trails would wind through each treated stand. Many landing locations would be needed to collect felled trees within the numerous stands where harvests are proposed. The density, pattern and location of skid trails and

[6] USDA Forest Service. 2003. Medicine Bow National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, Silvicultural Standards, Page 1-36. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. Lakewood, CO.

landings are dependent on unit size, shape, terrain, and timber volume and are determined during contract implementation. The Forest Service anticipates using a combination of commercial timber sales, stewardship contracts, service contracts, and Forest Service crews to implement silvicultural treatments.

Once logging is complete, skid trails and landings would be scarified or otherwise rehabilitated to reduce compaction and erosion in compliance with the Forest Plan. A certified weed-free native grass seed mix may be spread over the former tractor trails, if needed, for erosion control. Lodgepole pine seed may be spread and planting of lodgepole pine or other tree species may occur in treatment units as needed to achieve required tree stocking levels. Treatment of noxious weeds would occur as needed.

Roads Proposals

The Forest Service took a holistic approach to developing this roads proposal, with the aim of providing improved access to the forest while minimizing impacts of roads and trails on natural resources. Access to the forest would be improved by rerouting many poorly placed roads and adding unauthorized routes to the system to make legal, passable connectors. In areas accessed primarily by OHV, OHV trails are proposed to improve the user experience and minimize environmental impacts. While many miles of roads are proposed for decommissioning, the forest would remain accessible to recreationists.

The Forest Service proposes to construct 1 mile of road, reconstruct 2 miles of road, and reroute 1 mile of road. The Forest Service proposes to decommission (return to a natural state) approximately 26 miles of roads that are causing direct impacts to water resources, add approximately 6 miles of unauthorized routes to the National Forest road system, convert 1 mile of road to OHV trail, and build approximately 1 mile of OHV trails (Table 3 and Map 4). Approximately 20 miles of temporary roads may be needed to facilitate timber harvest.

Table 3. Transportation and travel management proposals.

Treatment	Miles
Keep Roads in Current, Open Status	81
Keep Roads in Current, Closed Status	55
Construct New Road	1
Construct Temporary Roads for Vegetation Treatments	20
Add Unauthorized Routes to System	6
Reconstruct Road (Heavy Maintenance)	2
Reroute Road	1
Decommission Open Road	26
Decommission Closed Road	3
Convert Open Road to Closed Road	1
Convert Road to OHV Trail	1
Build new OHV Trail	1
Convert Road to Foot Trail	1

Construction and Reconstruction

The existing road system of both open and closed roads, along with new temporary road construction (20 miles) and reconstruction (2 miles of NFSR 435) of existing system roads, would provide access for vegetation treatments. No new permanent road construction is anticipated for the timber removal portion of the proposed action. National Forest System Road 435 would be repaired or stabilized where needed to address resource concerns, usually on segments that are less than 0.5 mile in length.

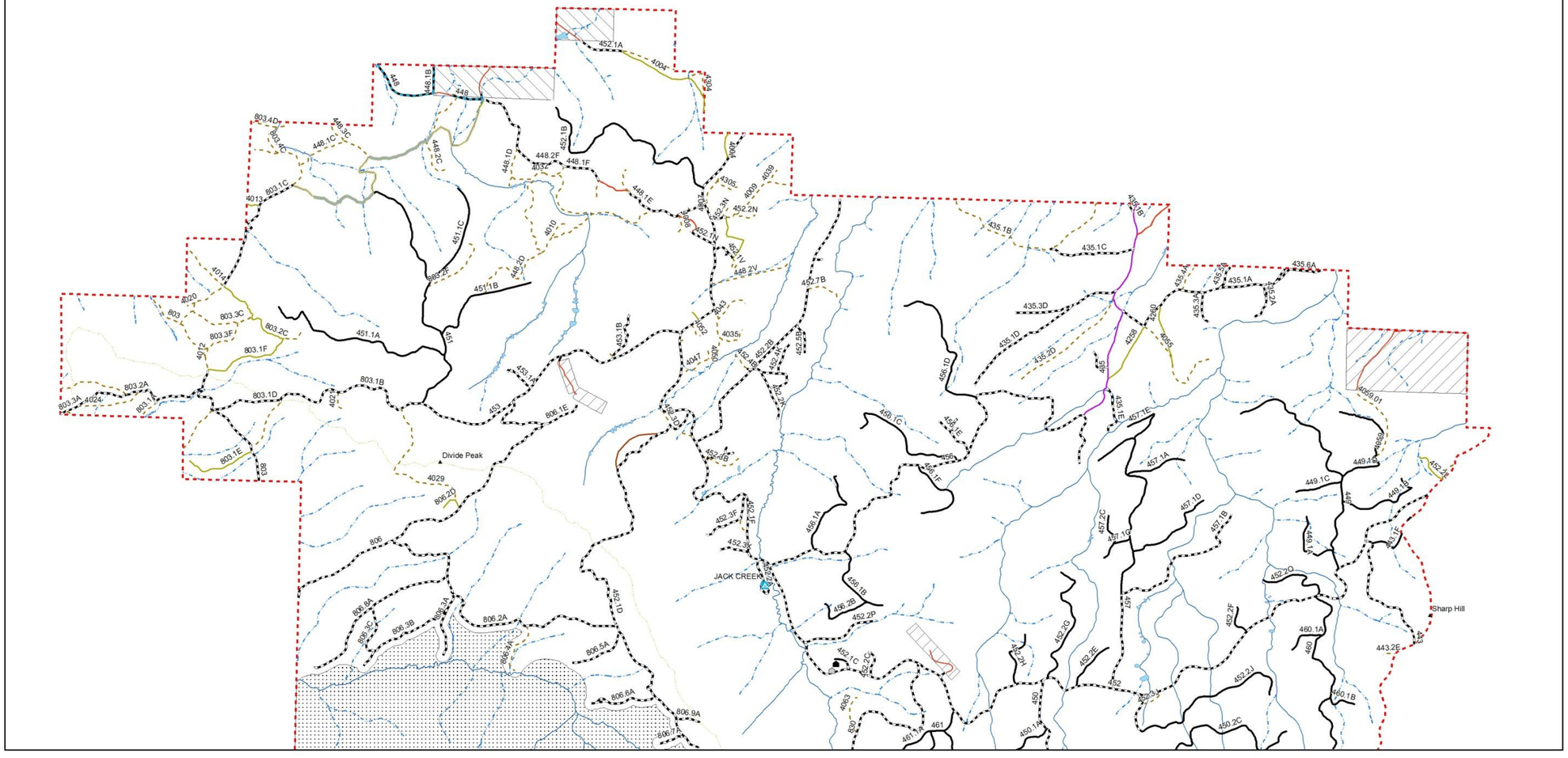
All road construction and reconstruction required for access to timber would use minimum ground-disturbing standards. These standards would follow site-specific forestry best management practices included in timber sale contract provisions. After project completion, temporary roads would be ripped to decompact soils, scattered with slash and rock, and closed to use.

Approximately 1 mile of road is proposed for construction to improve the national forest road system. New construction is proposed to connect NFSR 448.1E and 448.1F (0.27 mile), 452.1N and 448 (0.25 mile), and NFSR 435 to the Forest Boundary (0.37). In addition, several road segments would be rerouted, including NFSR 830.1B (0.19 mile) and NFSR 452.1D (0.52 mile). See Appendix A for details.

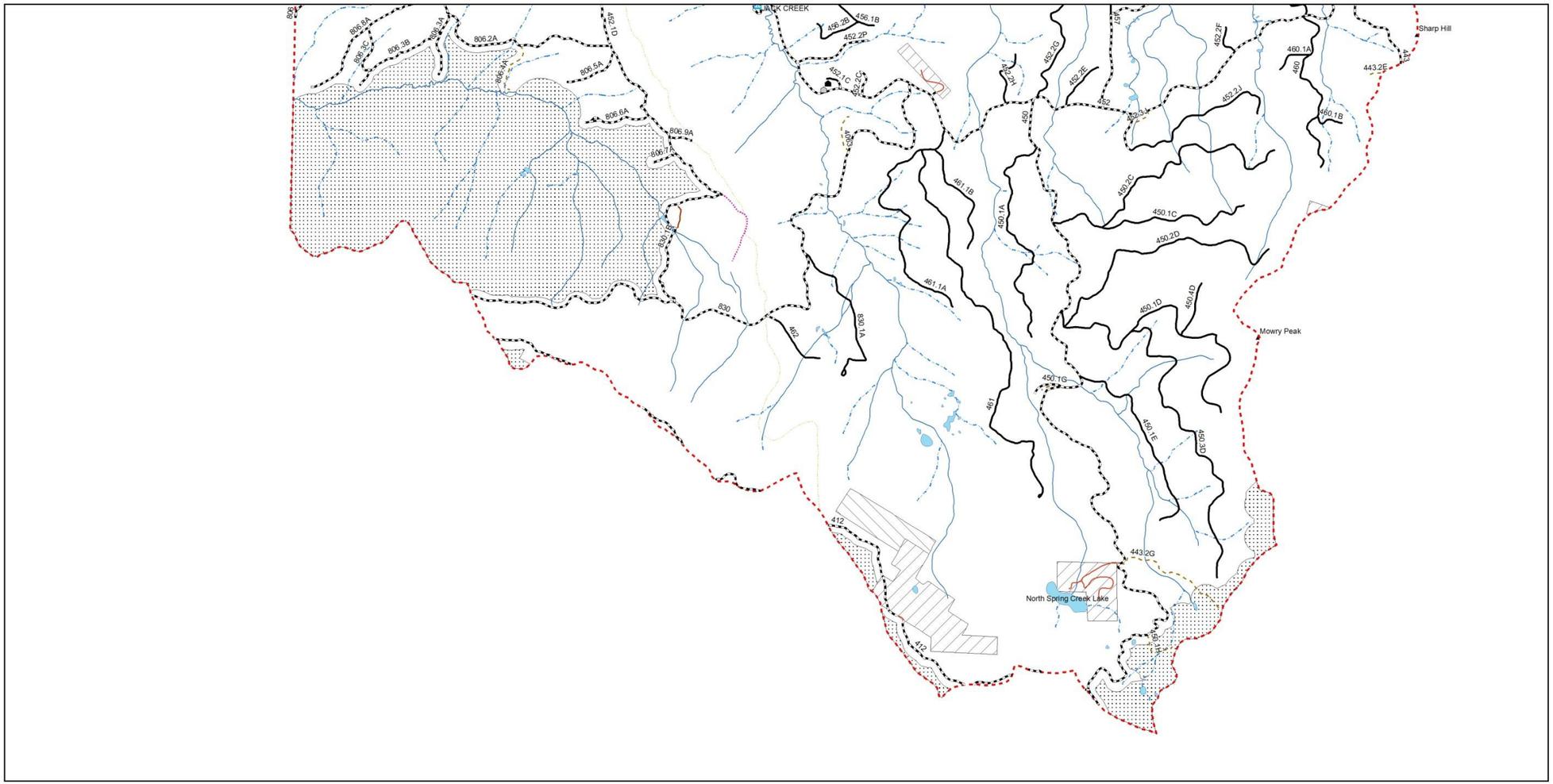
Decommissioning

Approximately 26 miles of National Forest System roads are proposed for decommissioning (Table 3, Map 4, Appendix A). Almost all of these roads are causing direct damage to wetland and water resources, and many are inaccessible due to their locations in very wet areas. Some are proposed for decommissioning to decrease road densities in extremely high road density areas (i.e., where recreation access would not be lost) or in sage-grouse core habitat.

NFSR 803.3F is proposed for decommissioning due to its location along an ephemeral stream and the deep ruts that contribute to degradation of water resources. Addition of an unauthorized route in a better location to the southeast would provide improved access to this area of the forest.



Map 4a. Transportation and travel management proposals in the North Savery Project Analysis Area (North).



SWM
11/18/2015

1 0.5 0 1 Miles

Legend

- Private and State Roads
- Keep as Closed Roads for Administrative Access
- Keep as Open Roads
- Convert Open Road to Closed Road
- Add Unauthorized Route to System
- Reroute Road to New Location
- Reconstruct Road
- Construct New Road
- Decommission Road
- Build New OHV Trail
- Convert Roads to OHV Trail
- Convert to Foot Trail
- Inventoried Roadless Area
- Private
- State
- Analysis Area Boundary
- Intermittent Stream
- Perennial Stream
- Lakes
- Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Map 4b. Transportation and travel management proposals in the North Savery Project Analysis Area (South).

Decommissioning permanently removes unneeded roads or routes from the transportation system. These roads and routes are no longer needed for access as a result of evolving forest land management allocations and current access needs. The objective of decommissioning is to stabilize and restore the area to a more natural state and preclude future motorized use. Typical road decommissioning on the Brush Creek/Hayden District includes an earthen berm at the road entrance with the road surface ripped with slash and rocks scattered on the roadbed. Some roads may have culverts removed and hardened stream crossings developed.

Methods to preclude motorized use include signing the entrance, scattering limbs and rocks on the roadbed, and physically blocking the road with fences, rocks, earthen berms, or debris. Restoration methods include scarification, revegetation, water barring, removing culverts and road fills from valley bottoms and re-establishing drainage-ways, pulling back unstable shoulders, and recontouring slopes. Closure methods would be determined on a site-specific basis.

Add Unauthorized Routes to National Forest Road System

Approximately 6 miles of unauthorized routes would be added to the system. These are routes that provide access to the forest and are not causing negative environmental impacts.

NFSR 448, looking east where it intersects North Fork Savery Creek and a beaver complex (T16N, R 87W, ne/sw Sec. 22). While part of this road is proposed for closure and decommissioning, addition of unauthorized routes and new OHV trails would provide improved legal access to this area of the forest.

OHV Trail Development

Approximately 1 mile of road would be converted to OHV-only trail and closed to full size vehicles. Approximately 1 mile of OHV-only trail would be constructed to maintain access in an area used primarily by OHVs and to minimize environmental impacts of road reroutes.

Public Opportunity to Comment

The public is invited to offer comments at this time. To ensure consideration in this process, comments must be submitted within 60 days following the date of publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to File an EIS published in the Federal Register. This NOI is expected to be published on or around December 1, 2015. This will be the first of two formal comment periods. The public will also have an opportunity to comment on the draft EIS, expected to be completed in May of 2016. Those who provide timely and specific comments during either comment period may be eligible to file an objection to the EIS and Draft Record of Decision pursuant to regulations at 36 CFR Part 218. Your comments and feedback will help to refine the proposal and strengthen our analysis.

Comments can be submitted by mail, fax, over the phone, in person, or by email. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project during this public comment period are eligible to file an objection. For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments must either sign the comments or verify identify upon request. The Predecisional Administrative Review Process outlining objection regulations was published in March 2013 and is documented at 36 CFR 218.

Comments, names, and contact information of those who comment will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, the Forest Service will not be able to send subsequent environmental documents to anonymous respondents.

Written comments should be submitted to the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District, Attn: Melanie Fullman, PO Box 249, Saratoga, WY 82331, or fax: 307-326-5250. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments to the office at 2171 Highway 130, Saratoga WY are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office at 2171 Wyoming Highway 130 during normal business hours or via telephone at 307-326-5258.

Electronic comments must be submitted to comments-rm-medicine-bow-routt-brush-creek-hayden@fs.fed.us in an email message, or in rich text (.rtf), portable document format (.pdf), or Word (.docx) format.

For more information concerning the proposal, or to receive a hard copy of the Scoping document, please contact Monique Nelson, Environmental Coordinator, at (307) 745-2310 or moniquelnelson@fs.fed.us.

Appendix A. Rationale for Proposed Changes to Road System

Table A-1. Proposed actions and rationale for proposed changes to national forest road system.

Road Number	Proposed Action	Rationale
435.1B	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in sage-grouse core habitat. Road currently provides duplicate access. Goes to the same place and is within 0.5 miles of 435.
435.2D	Decommission	This road is causing loss of riparian wetland damages at stream/wetland crossing and currently provides duplicate access – 435.1D parallels route 0.25 miles to NW.
435.4A	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in sage-grouse core habitat. This road provides duplicate access to BLM land and receives very little use. NFSR 435 (0.75 miles away) and 435.1A (0.3 miles away) provide access to same general BLM land.
443.2G	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning due to significant resource damage at wetland and stream crossings. The eastern portion of the road is in an inventoried roadless area, and there is no legal access from South Spring Lake since the road is on private land.
448	Reroute	Proposed to be rerouted onto 448.1E with addition of unauthorized route to move traffic to an upland location. 448 parallels riparian wetland areas for quite a distance and has multiple stream crossings causing erosion, sedimentation and riparian damage. There is no public access from the west end of the 448 at the forest boundary since it ends at private land. The westernmost portion of the road would be maintained as Level 1 for permittee access.
448.1A	Close to Public but Maintain as Level 1 Road	Proposed for closure because this short 0.25 mile spur leads to private land without public access. Would maintain as Level 1 road for access to Ranger Ditch.
448.1B	Close to Public but Maintain as Level 1 Road	Proposed for closure because this short 1000 ft spur in sagebrush leads to private land without public access. The proposed re-route for 448 would end just before this spur. Would maintain as Level 1 road for permittee access.

Road Number	Proposed Action	Rationale
448.1C	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because of severe damage to stream and wetland resources at double stream crossing (T16, R87, S 29, NE/NE). This crossing is impassable by regular sized 4x4 vehicles and has been used only by ATV/OHV, which are also causing significant damage. A better route for ATV/OHV is proposed just south of this location to connect to the 803 road system.
448.1D	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because of location in wetland complex. South of Savery Creek, this old road is not being used and is already grown in with vegetation.
448.1F	Decommission	Only the easternmost portion of this road is proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in a high road density area. The proposed addition of an unauthorized route between 448.1F and 448.1E would provide access to the same area.
448.1G	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because this steep spur road runs down to a stream and is causing erosion, sedimentation and loss of riparian and wetland characteristics at the stream crossing. The proposed re-route of 448 also restricts access to this road.
448.2C	Decommission	This 1700 foot spur is proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in an area of high road density. The proposed re-route of 448 also restricts access to this road.
448.2D	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in an area of high road density. The proposed re-route of 448 would restrict access to this road. Currently, this road cannot be accessed due to a lack of navigable crossing at Savery Creek.
448.2V	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning due to poor drainage and significant wetland damage.
448.3C	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because this spur leads to private land without public access. The proposed re-route of the 448.1C OHV trail also restricts access to this road.
450.1I	Decommission	Redundant road. Short spur is less than 400 feet away from and parallel to 450.
452.1A	Reroute	Proposed to be replaced with a better located, currently unauthorized route (4004) that provides access to State lands.
452.1F	Decommission	Proposed to be decommissioned because this road has poor drainage and is steep and eroding. This is a high road density area and this road provides redundant access with 452 to 452.3F.

Road Number	Proposed Action	Rationale
452.2N	Decommission	The area between 452.2N on north and 452.1V on the south has a lot of user created spurs. The road is poorly drained and deeply rutted. Proposal would add currently unauthorized eastern loop to connect to 452.1V.
452.3B	Decommission	This spur is proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in an area of high road density and because it is gradually being extended into a riparian area. Parallel to 452.1W.
452.3D	Decommission	This redundant 750 ft spur connects 452 to 452.1D 1000 ft from where 452 intersects 452.1D. Road is causing resource damage due to the steep, eroding slope.
452.4B	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because this road is causing erosion, sedimentation, and damage to riparian and wetland areas near McLain Creek. Decommissioning would start just past the first meadow to retain dispersed camp sites.
452.7B	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because this road is very steep and has poor drainage, with potential for erosion and sedimentation into Jack Creek. Would decommission near the forested edge in the first meadow to retain dispersed camping.
803	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because this road parallels riparian wetland areas for quite a distance and is causing erosion, sedimentation, and riparian damage at multiple stream crossings. The road is poorly drained and deeply rutted. The proposal includes addition of several currently unauthorized routes that would provide improved access to the area.
803.1A	Decommission	This road is proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in an area of high road density. This NW quarter of section 6 is confusing due to so many 2-tracks. The proposal includes addition of several currently unauthorized routes that would provide improved access to the area.
803.1B	Decommission	Proposal is to decommission a steep, rutted section of this road that has poor drainage.
803.1C	Decommission	Proposal is to decommission a steep section of this road that runs down to a riparian area and is causing erosion, sedimentation and riparian and wetland damage.
803.1D	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because of its poor condition and location. Road leads to valley bottom and wetlands. Access to area would be provided by addition of 803.1E.

Road Number	Proposed Action	Rationale
803.2A	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in sage-grouse core habitat. 803.2A is parallel to and within 900 ft of 803.3A.
803.2F	Decommission L1 road	Proposed for decommissioning because this road is no longer needed for administrative access. There will be no change to public motorized access. The road is parallel to and within 500 ft of 451.1C.
803.3F	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning because this road parallels an ephemeral stream, has poor drainage, and is deeply rutted.
806.4A	Decommission	Proposal is to decommission a steep, rutted section of this road that has poor drainage.
806.5A	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in an area of high road density.
806.7A	Decommission	Proposed for decommissioning to decrease road density in an area of high road density. This road is within ½ mile of and parallel to 806.6A and 830.1B.